[Information on the priest chief and his functions as head of the Masai state will be found in category 791.]

648*

Mr. Hemsted's Proposals, February, 1913.

On August 1st, 1912, Mr. R. W. Hemsted was placed in charge of the Masai Reserve. In February, 1913, he submitted a scheme for the administration of the Reserve. This memorandum dealt with the following points:—

Stations and Sub-Stations.—The Masai being a tribe of nomadic habits, scattered over a wide area, and concentrated in no particular localities, he considered that effective administration could not be carried on by officers remaining at fixed stations. Constant travelling was necessary, and he advocated the establishment of one central station only, with four or five outposts at each of which a small house could be erected for the visiting officer, with a few huts for his staff. The central station would be situated near the Uaso Nyiro, or on the River Narosura, and would be the headquarters of the officer in charge. In this way, economy and mobility would be combined with efficiency. He suggested the erection of outposts in the Ol-Orokuti near the Anglo-German border, in the Lemek Valley or on the Upper Mara, at Il Melili, at Ngong, and among the Laitokitok, or in the Magadi Railway zone.

Staff would consist of an officer in charge, a Senior District Commissioner, four Assistant District Commissioners, one Police and one Veterinary officer.

648*
614
[643]

Native Administration.—The tribal system of the Masai rendered direct administration of the clans through their own chiefs particularly suitable. The paramount chief was recognised by the whole tribe, but had tended, under British protection, to deteriorate into a mere figure-head. His duties could be considerably extended. Legalishu, Ngaroya, Masikondi, and Toroni drew pay from the Government, but these men, though intelligent, were conservative and lacking in energy. A few young and energetic men could be included in the ranks of the official headmen, whose numbers should be increased, and Mr. Hemsted suggested the following appointments as sufficient for the needs of the tribe:—

For the	Purko clan	1 chief and 3 headmen.
„	Kaputiei .. L'Odo Kilani .. Matapatu .. Sighirari ..	1 chief and 3 headmen.
„	Loita .. .. Salei	1 chief and 1 headman.
„	Kakonyukye	1 chief or headman.
„	Siria	1 chief or headman.
„	Il Dala Lekutuk ..	1 chief or headman.
„	Il Damat	1 chief or headman.
„	Laitokitok	1 chief or headman.

—a total of 18 chiefs and headmen, in addition to the paramount chief, for the supervision of some 37,500 Masai and 13,500 square miles of territory.

The clan divisions mentioned above were, in fact, geographical divisions, overlapping in certain cases, but Mr. Hemsted proposed the demarcation of each division and the restriction of the clans to the use of the areas allotted to them, which would be termed locations. The Masai were, he said, agreeable to such an arrangement, realising that any trouble which might arise could thus be localised.

[631]

Taxation.—While agreeing that the present form of hut tax was unsatisfactory, and inadequate in the case of the Masai, he considered that the difficulties of assessment, the dissatisfaction that might be created, and the probable consequent fluctuations in the revenue were serious objections to the imposition of a cattle tax. He therefore suggested a poll tax of Rs. 15 per head per annum, together with a compulsory subscription of Rs. 15 per head per annum towards a fund for development of, and improvements in the reserve. A revenue of Rs. 90,000 or Rs. 100,000 would thus be assured, and it was difficult to justify a higher tax. In the alternative, he suggested a tax of one to one-and-a-half per cent. on all cattle, irrespective of age or sex.

648*
651

646

character and great reputation as a medicine-man, but even his influence does not extend throughout the Purko and Loita divisions. The Council presided over by Sendeu also possesses a certain measure of authority, but these two present the only instances where respect is given and the respect shown in these cases is due almost entirely to the personalities of the individual presidents and not to the system which they represent.

563

The Kikuyu element in the Masai Reserve.

The population of the Masai Reserve numbers not much more than 40,000 of whom the great majority are Masai, but which also includes a considerable number of pure or half-caste Kikuyu. The indigent lives led by the Masai pastoralists possess considerable attraction for the neighbouring Kikuyu, who being less wealthy, are under the necessity of performing agricultural and manual labour either in their reserves or on alienated lands. For many years, the Kikuyu and Masai have engaged in trade, and their lands being contiguous, they have had ample opportunities for intercourse. To satisfy their ambitions of an idle life, migrations of individuals from Kikuyu to Masai country have been of not infrequent occurrence and the Masai Reserve therefore contains these scattered units, mainly among the divisions known as the Kaputiei and Il Dala Lekutuk.

648* 461 241

Masai aversion to manual labour.

The policy of the Government in dealing with the native tribes in the East African Protectorate has been to develop their agricultural instincts and industry and to discourage tendencies towards pastoralism. This policy has been pursued with success among the Kavirondo, Kikuyu and other tribes who, when encountered by the administration were under the necessity of engaging in agriculture and has been introduced with fair results into the system of such pastoral tribes as the Nandi and Lumbwa, but with the Masai it has been a total failure. Though encouragement has always been given, the Masai have shown no inclination to till the soil, and in the only recent cases where gardens have been prepared at the instigation of Masai owners, the labour employed was drawn from the Kikuyu tribe.

648* 563

Work by Kikuyu in the Masai Reserve.

The increased activity in recruiting natives as porters for the Carrier Corps necessitated by the military situation in March and April, 1917, led to the emigration of a number of Kikuyu from their own country into the Masai Reserve, and these emigrants, with a view to escaping enrolment, signed agreements to work as servants for Indians, Somalis and Masai. Colonel Ainsworth, then Military Commissioner for Labour, represented that while such evasion of their duties was highly reprehensible in regard to the employment with Indians and Somalis, any system which admitted of Kikuyu working for Masai was open to the greatest objections on both administrative and economic grounds. The question of such Kikuyu emigration to the Masai Reserve and elsewhere was discussed in Executive Council in June, 1917, and was referred to the Chairman of the Special Committee appointed to consider the "Resident Natives Bill," but no decision on the matter has yet been reported.

Present policy in dealing with Kikuyu emigration.

In view of the general desirability of discouraging such emigration of Kikuyu natives, the policy has been adopted in the Masai Reserve of prosecuting all Kikuyu living in that reserve who cannot claim by long residence or circumcision rights to have become Masai, and of returning them to their own reserve. This policy applies to the cases of all those Kikuyu who have joined the Masai since the move from Laikipia. Efforts have also been made to register all Kikuyu who may be considered to have become Masai.

648* 791 643

The Paramount Chief.

An important step in the revision of the system of Masai administration was undertaken early in 1918, when for reasons mainly connected with the personality of the holder, the Acting Governor recommended that the office of Paramount Chief of the Masai should be abolished.

Supgi.

At the time of Lenana's death, in 1911, Seggi was still a boy, and control over the Masai was exercised by the two regents, Ngarova and Legalishu. When Seggi came of age and assumed the duties assigned to him in his capacity as Paramount Chief, he was given an extended trial but proved himself to be totally unreliable. He lacked energy, physique and moral courage: he was intemperate and untrustworthy: he appeared to regard any administrative function as an

*648 791 643

unpleasant duty and to look to the Government to assert for him his position as the Paramount Chief of the tribe without requiring in return any effort or energy on his part. The Sighirari of the Engidongi, of which division he was a member, and which was one of the smallest divisions in the tribe, acknowledged him as their chief, but the Purko, the most important division in the reserve, regarded him with open contempt, while the Loita, Siria and other divisions did not recognise him at all, and he refused to attempt to assert his authority over them. The position was, therefore, that the Government stood alone in recognising Seggi as the Paramount Chief of the Masai, and that, as such, he was of very little use to the administration.

Laibon.

A complication arose in this connection by the practice which had previously been followed of regarding the Chief Laibon or medicine-man of the Masai as the Paramount Chief. Lenana, the father of Seggi, had been the Chief Laibon and his functions as such had been to arrange the rainfall, direct raids, provide medicine in connection with various ceremonies and to undertake other duties of this description. Subordinate to him there had been the medicine-men of the various sections. When, about 1895, the Government began to establish closer relations with the Masai, Lenana had evinced a strong tendency to friendship and had personally been to a great extent responsible for the good feeling which came into existence. The administrative officers at that time, not being fully conversant with the constitution of the tribe, had been inclined to look upon Lenana, not only as the chief medicine-man, but as the Paramount chief also, and as time went on this dual authority came to be generally accepted as in consonance with Masai tradition. Further, in consequence of the absence during his lifetime of adequate Government control over the administration of the tribe, it had been essential to support someone who could keep the Masai in order and to grant him more or less autocratic powers. In fact, however, the tribal organisation of the Masai does not provide for such a position as that of paramount chief, and the influence which Lenana had exercised over the tribe had been due solely to his position as the Chief Medicine-man which his astuteness and strength of character had helped him to magnify.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Government officially recognised Lenana as paramount chief, the Agreement of 1904 referred to him as Laibon and not as the paramount chief, while, on the other hand, in the Agreement of 1911, Seggi was styled "Paramount Chief of all the Masai." The phraseology of this latter Agreement is incorrect, and there is no doubt that in the minds of the Masai, Seggi has no authority as Chief elsewhere than among his own division.

Functions of Paramount Chiefs and Medicine-men.

In making recommendations for the abolition of the office of paramount chief, Mr. Bowring drew attention to the fact that the functions of a paramount chief and of a chief medicine-man were incompatible. As paramount chief, Seggi was expected to endeavour to maintain order and to assist the Government, while as chief medicine-man, his whole trend of thought must of necessity be reactionary and secretive and he, together with all the other medicine-men, must realise that any real progress on the part of the tribe could not fail to undermine their influence.

*C48 791

The future of Seggi.

Mr. Bowring advocated the continuance of the system of government of each division through its own local elders and local council, under which system Seggi would take his place among his own elders but would not be concerned with the administration of the rest of the tribe. It would be difficult to prevent the perpetuation of the existence of medicine-men if the tribe wished to preserve them, and he thought that a preferable policy would be to instil a desire into their minds for progress and development in which case these survivals of barbarism would eventually disappear. The Masai were a very conservative and unprogressive people, isolated in a vast grazing area, and the task of awakening them to a more enlightened train of thought, onerous as it was, was rendered all the more difficult and ineffective by the unnecessary obstacle which had been placed between the administration and the tribe in the form of a paramount chief, who had no place in the constitution as evolved by native custom and tradition. He was therefore confident that the abolition of that office would offer the Masai better security than the existing system and he was convinced that it was more in accordance with the opinion of the Masai themselves.

[81]

231	613
233	614
262	643
304	721
411	754
524	759
564	802
595	805

[For mythological accounts of the origin of:

livestock and dogs	see category 539, p. 359
honey as a source of food	360
board game	361
club carved of wood	362
blood as a source of food	362
blacksmiths	364
clans and lineages	368-369
counting and number words	370
7-day week	376
polygamy	377
ol oiboni and chief	377
circumcision	382
double-edged knife	382
sorcerers	382
physicians	362
mandate for war on non- Masai	382-383.]